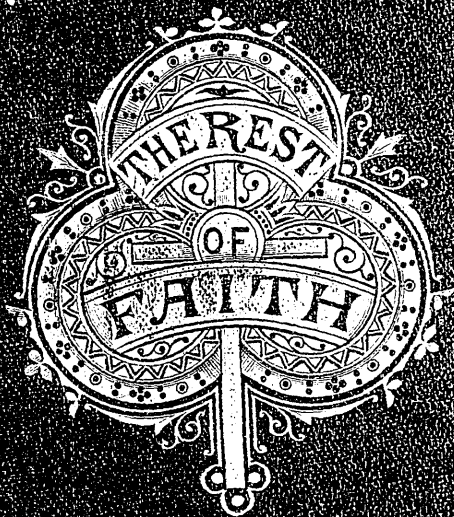


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The Rest of Faith.



THE

REST OF FAITH.

BY

REV. A. B. EARLE.

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." — MATT. xi. 28.

"For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said."
— HEB. iv. 3.

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TO ALL

WHO EARNESTLY DESIRE THE

Rest of Faith,

THIS BOOK IS SINCERELY INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE.

THE design of this book is to show how a Christian, though weak and imperfect, seeing and knowing but in part, surrounded as he must be, while living here, with influences opposed to Christ and holiness,—may walk with Christ without interruption or condemnation.

That the Holy Spirit may guide the answer to this question, and bring peace and rest to many anxious, aching hearts, is the sincere desire and prayer of

A. B. E.

NEWTON, Mass., 1871.



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THE REST OF FAITH.



CHAPTER I.

AN ENEMY WITHIN.

THERE are usually two marked periods in the experience of every Christian who learns how to abide in Christ's love.

The first memorable, never-to-be-forgotten season in his history is that hour when he receives the witness of his adoption, and begins to cry, "Abba, Father." "Old things are passed away ;

behold, all things are become new." All enemies seem slain. His cup of joy is full. His peace is like a river. He has found "the pearl of great price," and desires that all may possess it. The language of his heart is,—

"Now will I tell to sinners round
What a dear Saviour I have found ;
I'll point to thy redeeming blood,
And say, Behold the way to God !"

He is surprised that every Christian is not as happy as he is. He thinks it must be they are not faithful to Jesus. The way seems so pleasant, and Christ's service so easy, that he expects to go right on and do every duty, and enjoy the same through life.

But it is not long before he cries out

in great distress: "I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members."

He finds he has been doing or saying the very things he hates, and leaving undone the things he should have done. He begins to feel condemnation; but, supposing he can soon overcome this difficulty, makes new resolutions that hereafter he will be faithful. These resolutions, however, are not kept. He finds it more difficult to perform his vows than he expected. He cries out, "How to perform that which is good I find not." Finding himself disappointed in his own efforts, he goes to the law for assistance; but the law is

too "weak through the flesh" to keep him: his peace is greatly interrupted.

A season of fasting and prayer, with the confession of his departures, brings back to him "the joy of salvation." But it is soon gone. The most thorough consecration and solemn vows are again made, but in spite of all his efforts they are broken. He is almost discouraged, and cries out: "What shall I do?" "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" "Is there no balm?" "Is there no physician?" "Must I always live in this way?"

"You that love the Lord indeed,
Tell me, is it thus with you?"

I find a large number of Christ's dear children in just this restless, anxious

state: dissatisfied with this way of living; hungering and thirsting to know how they may abide in the fulness of Christ's love without these changes in their religious experience.

And yet, in this very hungering, this longing for the fulness of Christ's love, among so many Christians, I see signs of great promise to the church and the world.

Christ is saying to his people, "Come up higher;" and they are coming, where they can realize the exceeding blessedness of a life hid with Christ in God.

This is no new feeling. Many in the past have felt the same, and sought and found this blessing. I will, in the following chapter, give a part of the experience of a few of them.

“I ask them whence their victory came :

They, with united breath,

Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,

Their triumph to his death.”

“Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.”





CHAPTER II.

TESTIMONY.

REV. DR. PAYSON says: " Were I to adopt the figurative language of Bunyan, I might date this letter from the land of Beulah, of which I have been for some weeks a happy resident.

" The celestial city is full in my view ; its glories beam upon me ; its breezes fan me ; its odors are wafted to me ; its sounds strike my ears, and its spirit is breathed into my heart. Nothing separates me from it but the river of death, which now appears but as an insignificant

rill, that may be crossed at a single step whenever God gives permission.

“The Sun of Righteousness has been drawing nearer and nearer, appearing larger and brighter as he approached. And now he fills the whole hemisphere, pouring forth a flood of glory, in which I seem to float like an insect in the beams of the sun; exulting, yet almost trembling, while I gaze upon this excessive brightness, and wondering, with unutterable wonder, why God should deign thus to shine upon a simple worm.”

After this rich experience, this great increase of faith, Dr. Payson cried out, in view of his former distressing doubts, his severe and unequal struggle with the powers of darkness, and the great loss he

had thereby sustained in his own enjoyment and usefulness: "Oh that I had known this twenty years ago!" That is, that twenty years before he could have known, as he did then, that Christ had made provisions for him to live and walk with him, without these sad, depressing breaks in his religious enjoyment; that the keeping power was in Christ, and not in his faithfulness: "We are kept by the power of God through faith;" and if our faith in Christ is unwavering, nothing can disturb our peace and rest.

Mrs. Edwards, wife of President Edwards, as far back as 1742, realized this same void within, this unrest, this longing after the fulness of Christ's love.

She says: "I sought and obtained the full assurance of faith. I cannot find language to express how certain the everlasting love of God appeared: the everlasting mountains and hills were but shadows to it. My safety and happiness, and eternal enjoyment of God's immutable love, seemed as durable and unchangeable as God himself. Melted and overcome by the sweetness of this assurance, I fell into a great flow of tears, and could not forbear weeping aloud.

"The presence of God was so near and so real, that I seemed scarcely conscious of any thing else. My soul was filled and overwhelmed with light and love, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and seemed just ready to go away from the

body. This exultation of soul subsided into a heavenly calm and rest of soul in God, which was even sweeter than what preceded it."

"My life is folded in the life of Jesus,
No longer mine, but purchased by that tide, —
That crimson tide, which, shed on Calvary, frees us
From those dark stains that in our hearts abide.
My life is hid with Christ, and I am his :
Whate'er his will, that am I bound to do ;
Where'er he goes, I cannot stay behind ;
In what he does my hand shall have employ ;
Whene'er he suffers, sorrow fills my mind ;
When he rejoices, I partake the joy.
He bought me by his blood, and I am his :
I have no other will, no other grief nor bliss."

James B. Taylor is another instance of this rich experience, after years of struggle with the powers of darkness. I give a few extracts from his memoir.

He says: "It was on the 23d of April, 1822, when I was on a visit at Haddam, Conn. Memorable day! The time and place will never, no, never, be forgotten. I recur to it at this moment with thankful remembrance.

"I pleaded and wrestled with God; and, praise to his name, after six long years I found what I had so long and so earnestly sought.

"My earnest desire then was, as it had been ever since I professed religion six years before, that all love of the world might be destroyed, all selfishness extirpated, pride banished, unbelief removed, all idols dethroned, every thing hostile to holiness and opposed to the divine will crucified; that holiness to the Lord might be engraved on my heart,

and evermore characterize my conversation.

“I felt that I needed that for which I was then, and for a long time had been, hungering and thirsting. I desired it, not for my benefit only, but for that of the church and the world. At this very juncture I was most delightfully conscious of giving up all to God. I was enabled in my heart to say: ‘Here, Lord, take me, take my whole soul, and seal me thine,—thine now, and thine for ever. If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.’

“There then ensued such emotions as I never before experienced: all was calm and tranquil, silent, solemn, and a heaven of love pervaded my whole soul. I had a witness of God’s love to me and of

mine to him. Shortly after I was dissolved in tears of love and gratitude to our blessed Lord. The name of Jesus was precious to me, —

‘ ’Twas music in my ear.’

“He came as King, and took full possession of my heart; and I was enabled to say, ‘I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.’ Let him, as King of kings and Lord of lords, reign in me, — reign without a rival for ever.

“I know and am as fully assured of my acceptance with God as I can be of my existence.

“I have no anxiety about the future. My only wish is to know what my heavenly Father will have me do.

“I would not determine. ‘Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth.’ I am not my own keeper; neither would I be at my own disposal. Godliness with contentment is great gain. I trust I have won this prize.

“People may call this blessing by what name they please, — faith of assurance, holiness, perfect love, sanctification, — it makes no difference with me whether they give it a name or no name, it continues a blessed reality; and, thanks to my heavenly Father, it is my privilege to enjoy it: it is yours also; and the privilege of all to enjoy the same, and to go beyond any thing that I have ever yet experienced.”

Rev. Daniel Steele, D. D., President

of Genesee College, says: "At my conversion, thirty years ago, through weakness of faith, the seal of my justification was impressed so slightly that the word Abba, my Father, was scarcely legible. Yet in answer to a mother's prayers, in my infancy, consecrating, with conscious acceptance, her son to the Christian ministry, I was called to preach, but called with a 'woe unto me,' instead of an 'anointing with the oil of gladness.'

"I will not dwell upon the unpleasant theme of a ministry of twenty years almost fruitless in conversions, through a lack of an unction from the Holy One. My great error was in depending on the truth alone to break stony hearts. The Holy Spirit, though formally acknowledged and invoked, was practically ig-

nored. My personal experience during much of this time consisted in

‘Sorrows and sins, and doubts and fears,
A howling wilderness.’

“But I discovered in one who came across my path the fulness of the Holy Spirit enjoyed as an abiding blessing, styled by him ‘Rest in Jesus.’ I was convicted: I sought earnestly the same great gift, but could not exercise faith till I had made a public confession of my sin in preaching self more than Christ, and in being satisfied with the applause of the Church above the approval of her divine Head.

“I immediately began to feel a strange freedom daily increasing, the cause of which I did not distinctly apprehend. I was then led to seek the conscious and

joyful presence of the Comforter in my heart. Having settled the question that this was not merely an apostolic blessing, but for all ages, 'He shall abide with you for ever,' I took the promise, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.' The '*verily*' had to me all the strength of an oath. Out of the '*whatsoever*' I took all temporal blessings, not because I did not believe them to be included, but because I was not then seeking them. I then wrote my own name in the promise, not to exclude others, but to be sure that I included myself. Then writing underneath these words, 'To-day is the day of salvation,' I found that my faith had three points to master: *the Comforter, for me, now.*

“ Upon the promise I ventured with an act of appropriating faith, claiming the Comforter as my right in the name of Jesus. For several hours I clung by naked faith, praying and repeating Charles Wesley’s hymn:—

‘ Jesus, thine all-victorious love
Shed in *my* heart abroad.’

I then ran over in my mind the great facts in Christ’s life, especially dwelling upon Gethsemane and Calvary, his ascension, priesthood, and all-atoning sacrifice. Suddenly I became conscious of a mysterious power exerting itself upon my sensibilities. My physical sensations, though not of a nervous temperament, in good health, alone and calm, were like those of electric sparks

passing through my bosom with slight but painless shocks, melting my hard heart into a fiery stream of love. Christ became so unspeakably precious that I instantly dropped all earthly good, reputation, property, friends, family, every thing, in the twinkling of an eye ; my soul crying out,

‘None but Christ to me be given,
None but Christ in earth or heaven.’

“ He stood forth as *my* Saviour, all radiant in his loveliness, ‘the chief among ten thousand.’ Yet there was no phantasm, or image, or uttered word, apprehended by my intellect. The affections were the sphere of this wonderful phenomenon, best described as ‘the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the

Holy Ghost.' I was more certain that Christ loved me than I was of the existence of the solid earth and the shining sun.

"I intuitively apprehended Christ. My college class were just then discussing the subject of the intuitive cognitions. I began to apply Sir Wm. Hamilton's tests of these; namely, that they are simple, incomprehensible, necessary, and universal. The last adjective, of course, could not apply to the intuitive belief of one individual.

"But my consciousness testified that my certainty of Christ's love had the three first-named characteristics, that it was to me even a necessary truth, the contrary of which was as unthinkable as the annihilation of space. The last

remarkable peculiarity remained more than forty days, after which I had hours in which I could conceive the contrary of the proposition, 'Christ loves me.' On such occasions my firm conviction of his love was not an intuition, but an inference from my past experience, together with the absence of any feeling of condemnation. . . .

"But language is wholly inadequate to express a manifestation of Christ which did not formulate itself in words, but in the mighty, overwhelming pulsations of love. The joy for weeks was unspeakable. . . .

"The ecstasy has subsided into a delicious and unruffled peace, rising into ecstasy only in acts of especial devotion. I find no fear of man nor of

death. I can no longer accuse myself of unbelief, the root of all sin. What may be in me, below the gaze of consciousness, I do not know. I must wait till occasions shall put me to the test. It would not be wise for me to assert that all sinful anger—there is a righteous anger—is taken away, till I have passed through a college rebellion, or something equally provoking.

“If sin consists only in active energies, I am not conscious of such dwelling within me. If sin consists in a state, as some assert, I infer that I am not in such a state, from the absence of sinful energies flowing therefrom, and more especially from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. I have had no other direct wit-

ness than that attesting Christ's love to me.

“ My experience,” he writes, after enjoying this blessing several months, “ of the joy of the Holy Ghost grows richer and richer. Every day I seek a place for secret praise. I am filled and flooded with a sense of the divine love. How delightful any kind of service for the blessed Master! How sweet to feel his circling arms around one on every side, — so that no calamity can possibly befall the soul ! ”





CHAPTER III.

SEVENTH AND EIGHTH OF ROMANS.

THE Apostle Paul has given us a similar experience in the seventh and eighth chapters of Romans.

After his deep conviction for sin, and receiving evidence of regeneration, he arose and was baptized; and at once commenced to persuade men to embrace Christ as their Redeemer.

He soon connected himself in church relation with those disciples he had hated and persecuted. In common with other converts he found pleasure in

Christ's service. The Bible now became precious to him. "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." "The law is holy, just, and good," he said.

But he soon met with a great obstacle in the way of his spiritual advancement. It was an enemy within, a law in his members warring against the law of his mind. Sometimes this enemy would get great advantage over him, and bring him into captivity "to the law of sin." Strong efforts were at once made to overcome this difficulty.

Repeated resolutions of faithfulness were made, but they were not kept. "To will," he says, "is present with me," — that is, to make good resolutions, — "but how to perform that which is good I find not."

His inability to perform these vows, and do what he clearly saw he ought to do, troubled him, interfered with his peace and usefulness, so that at times he became unhappy; and in his distress cried out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

He felt the need of a deliverer, and must have one,—a present Saviour to keep as well as to redeem him,—or he would continue to make resolutions without being able to "perform that which is good."

The great burden of his prayer and inquiries now seemed to be, to know how he could live and walk in the service of Christ, without being brought into captivity to sin, to abide in the ful-

ness of Christ's love without condemnation.

He seemed first to get a glimpse of Christ in his infinite fulness, as not only able to keep him from falling, but to keep him through a simple faith from condemnation.

This view greatly encouraged him, and caused him to exclaim, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." That is, I thank God there is a deliverer. "What the law could not do," what conscience could not do, what his own faithfulness could never do, Christ could do for him. He now saw clearly that every necessity was fully provided for in Christ. "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh," God had sent his Son to do.

At this point of his struggle Christ seemed to open "his understanding that he might understand the Scriptures." Here he received light. He discovered that all power to keep as well as to redeem was in Christ. His reliance for keeping power was transferred from his own efforts to Christ. To be faithful was then a pleasure, a luxury. Like the Redeemer, it was his meat to do the will of God. But his calm, quiet, yet active rest was the rest of faith.

Christ now became, by a strong faith, in reality his practical deliverer from sin and temptation; his "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." At that moment Paul "entered into rest." Then he could say from actual experience, "There is there-

fore now (not at death or in the future, but now) 'no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' Then he knew (in the higher sense) in whom he had believed. His body of death was laid down at the cross, and never taken back. He went on believing, working, triumphing, through all the rest of his long and very useful life; willing to stay and toil on earth, but having a desire "to depart and be with Christ, which is far better."

He was never again heard to say, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" but, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." He was content in any situation. The fear of

death was gone: he was ready to be offered at any time. Although imperfect as yet and reaching forth for what was before, yet he realized a calm, sweet, abiding rest in Christ, that never seemed disturbed by the severe trials through which he passed. "None of these things move me." And when the summons came for him to leave his work on earth for his crown in heaven, it found him still enjoying the rest of faith. When the Master asked him to lay down his life for him in Rome, he said, "I am ready."

"Lord, give us such a faith as this;
And then, whate'er may come,
We'll taste e'en here the hallowed bliss
Of an eternal home."

I could give a cloud of witnesses all

testifying to the same thing; that is, after receiving evidence of regeneration, they felt a longing of heart for something higher, a state that would enable them to abide in Christ's love without interruption. This they sought and found, and continued to enjoy until dismissed from the toils of earth to the joys of heaven; while others, still living, after ten or twenty years continue to enjoy the same blessing, with increasing sweetness; — showing that Christians, though imperfect and unworthy, can by faith rest in a perfect Saviour without condemnation.



CHAPTER IV.

REST FOUND BY BELIEVING.

I WILL next answer the anxious inquiry that comes from so many struggling, longing, Christian hearts :—

“How can I reach this state of rest in Jesus?”

The very first thing to be settled in your own mind is this : “Do I fully believe Christ has made provision for me to abide, without interruption, in the fulness of his love?” If one doubt remains in your mind about this, you will

not obtain it, however anxious or earnest you are in your efforts.

As it is attained by faith, it is necessary for you to believe it attainable. Think of the absurdity of praying and searching for a thing you doubt can be obtained. Would not such an effort be solemn mockery? "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

Let this point be fully settled. Take time, if necessary. Search the Scriptures for light. Pray in faith. If your unbelief is in your way, turn all your batteries on that; ask those you think are walking with Christ to help you. Continue these efforts until all doubt is gone on the subject, until you become

entirely satisfied that Christ has made ample provision for you to abide in his love without condemnation.

When this is clear to your own mind, then come to the Saviour just as you would if you could see him with your natural eyes. Come at once, by a childlike, simple faith, believing just what he has said. When he says to you, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest," your immediate reply should be, —

"Just as I am, thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve ;
Because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God ! I come, I come."

Do not stop to inquire of Jesus how he can give rest to one so sinful and

unworthy as you are, — to one who has made so many vows and resolutions to be faithful, and failed. Leave all that to him : let him take his own time and way to fulfil his promise. It is enough for you that he has said, “ I will give you rest.” Expect him to do as he has said.

“ Only trust him, only trust him,

Only trust him just now ;

Just now only trust him,

Only trust him just now.”

If you have no emotion, no joy or light for the present, no matter : trust God in the dark. Let your faith look to the other side of the cloud for the “ silver lining.”

“Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.”

If the Divine face is hid from you, and all appears dark, even though the providences of God seem to frown upon you, — health fails, friends die, property is taken away, — still stand firm, trust all, without wavering, to him.

“God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain.”

“Weeping may endure for a night,
but joy cometh in the morning.”

“Though he slay me, yet will I trust
in him.”

Having consecrated all to Jesus as far as knowledge goes, as far as you

understand yourself, take nothing from the altar; but expect him to give you the evidence of your acceptance, without one doubt, just when and as he pleases, whether you perceive any change in your feelings or not.

What if for the present your heart seems harder than ever, and you realize no love for souls, no enjoyment in prayer, the promises seem sealed and hid from your view, and your own heart and life, it may be, never before appeared so vile and useless, — what of it? You are the patient, and Christ the physician: you are not to select the remedies, nor the mode of applying them. There stand the promises. Christ is the same almighty Saviour

he would be if every thing was bright to you. He may, and probably will, answer your prayer very differently from any thing you have arranged, or would arrange. Newton has so well described this point that I will ask you to read this hymn carefully:—

“I asked the Lord that I might grow
In faith and love and every grace ;
Might more of his salvation know,
And seek more earnestly his face.

’Twas he who taught me thus to pray,
And he, I trust, has answered prayer ;
But it has been in such a way
As almost drove me to despair.

I hoped that in some favored hour
At once he’d answer my request,
And by his love’s constraining power
Subdue my sins and give me rest.

Instead of this, he made me feel
The hidden evils of my heart ;
And let the angry powers of hell
Assault my soul in every part.

Yea, more : with his own hand he seemed
Intent to aggravate my woe ;
Crossed all the fair designs I schemed,
Blasted my gourds, and laid me low.

‘ Lord, why is this ? ’ I trembling cried :
‘ Wilt thou pursue thy worm to death ? ’
‘ ’Tis in this way,’ the Lord replied,
‘ I answer prayer for grace and faith.

‘ These inward trials I employ,
From self and pride to set thee free,
And break thy schemes of earthly joy,
That thou may’st seek thy all in me.’ ”

The treatment of your case may be very different from this. But it will be in such a way as to humble you in the

dust, and let you see that you have not had your own way in the matter at all, that your will has been given up to God.

If there seems to be a delay in giving you this blessing, do not stagger at the promise. "Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry;" that is, it will not tarry a moment after you are prepared for its reception.

Remember God loves you, although you are so unworthy of his love; and does not afflict willingly any one.

As soon as he has prepared you, so that you can see that it is all of grace through faith that you are kept, and you can trust him wholly, then he will give you rest,—not fear, not torment,

but rest; a calm, sweet, abiding rest in him. It is your privilege to remain in this sweet state of rest in Jesus, whatever may be the toils or trials of earth, until you receive your crown in heaven.

“Rest, weary soul!

The penalty is borne, the ransom paid,

For all thy sins full satisfaction made;

Strive not to do thyself what Christ has done,

Claim the free gift and make the joy thine own;

No more by pangs of guilt and fear distress,

Rest, sweetly rest!”





CHAPTER V.

HOW CAN I ABIDE IN THIS REST?

YOUR own experience in reaching it will furnish the answer. As it is reached only by faith, it can be retained only by faith. Christ needs no assistance from you or any one else to keep your heart in perfect peace; but asks you to leave it all to him, and says, "Only believe."

Then you can say, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

Be faithful and watchful, but do not depend on either faith or vigilance. Your promises and resolutions, so far as keeping you in the love of Christ is concerned, are ropes of sand. "We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." "Only believe." Your faith, like Abraham's, is counted to you for righteousness.

If your faith in Christ is unwavering, nothing can interrupt your peace and rest. The darkness and the light are both alike to faith. If your way seems dark and hedged up for the present, you need not be troubled. Trust God in the dark.

"Faith is the brightest evidence

Of things beyond our sight :

It pierces through the veil of sense,

And dwells in heavenly light."

If at any time you are assailed by the powers of darkness, or if sudden temptation meets you, then let your prayer be, "Jesus, keep me ;" or a prayer embracing this thought. Depend on Christ entirely to keep you.

You may hear him whispering, "Do you believe without a doubt I will keep you now ?" If at that moment your faith and trust are alone in him, and not in your faithfulness, to keep you, he will say, "Peace, be still ;" and all will be calm. The fiery dart will be quenched before it reaches your heart. He will keep that soul in "perfect peace" whose entire trust is in him. You will not retain this sweet peace and rest by hard fighting and personal struggles, but by believing. "Only believe," and

you may look on, while Christ does all the rest. Although you are weak and imperfect, and see in part, and know but in part, yet the grace of God meets you in your weakness, and supplies all your necessities in Jesus.

There is one way by which you may know when you are resting in Christ by faith. It is when you are bearing the fruit of the Spirit, which is "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Do you bear this fruit? If not, you are not abiding in the fulness of Christ's love, no matter what you profess. It would be well for every Christian to ask, "Do I bear this fruit? If not, I am not right."

I am very sorry to find persons claiming to live near the Saviour, who mani-

fest a harsh, unkind, and even a fault-finding spirit; and in some instances whose lives are a reproach. In this way Christ is greatly dishonored; and many anxious Christians, who long to get up higher and abide in him, are hindered and kept back. Any Christian sweetly resting in Christ will have great patience; he will not be offended at every little thing; he will speak kindly, even to those he thinks are wrong. "Charity" — which is love to God and man — "suffereth long, and is kind," "is not easily provoked," "beareth all things." "Charity never faileth."

Since it does not please God to give us any darkness, a Christian resting in Christ will have warm and glowing love for Christ and his people, and will

not walk in darkness. If he lacks these things, he is not right, does not abide in the love of God; and Jesus says, "Friend, come up higher."

He may have severe trials of his faith, but will say, "It is the Lord: let him do what he will."

God tried Abraham, — asked him to offer up his son. The trial was a severe one; yet he obeyed, although he could not understand the reasons for this apparently strange requirement. He went forward without hesitation. He knew God could not make a mistake, nor do a wrong thing. After this trial, God said, "I know Abraham." "In blessing I will bless him." So let us trust God in trial, or in affliction, the same as in the day of prosperity.

“Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain.”

Many of God's dealings with us seem mysterious now ; but let us quietly and trustingly wait : he will make all plain to us “ hereafter.”

As the fierce winds ruffle the surface water, while the deep fountain beneath remains calm and peaceful, so the Christian may realize changes in his emotions, while his faith and rest in Christ remain undisturbed. If dear ones are removed, he will no doubt keenly feel the trial, but will say, “ The Lord has given, and the Lord has taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord.” Christ's own fingers take up the bleeding veins severed by these afflictions.

“If thou shouldst take them all away,
Yet would I not repine;
Before they were possessed by me,
They were entirely thine.”

This state will prevent gloomy and distressing fears about the future. It teaches the Christian the great lesson: In whatever situation, therewith to be content. The fear of death is greatly removed; he knows he has not dying grace now, and does not need it; but believes Christ's word, “As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” He sweetly rests in Jesus, expecting grace and help just when needed. It would be burdensome to carry dying grace with us in all the trials of life. Christ does not teach us to pray for bread to-day for all coming time, but “day by day.” And

hence to a believing, trusting Christian, Christ's "burden is light." Only for the present; no anxious care, no trouble on our part about "the morrow." "For the morrow"—with Christ to arrange and provide for it—"shall take thought for the things of itself."

"O happy Christian! who can boast,
'The Son of God is mine,'—
Happy, though humbled in the dust,
Rich in this gift divine."





CHAPTER VI.

HOW HE LED ME.

ABOUT ten years ago, I began to feel an inexpressible hungering and longing for the fulness of Christ's love. I had often had seasons of great joy and peace in Christ, and in his service. I had seen many precious souls brought into the fold of Christ. I fully believe I then belonged to Christ, that my name was in his family record.

I loved the work of the ministry, but had long felt an inward unrest, a void in my soul that was not filled. Seasons

of great joy would be followed by seasons of darkness and doubt. If I had peace, I feared it would not continue; and it did not.

Many anxious Christians came to me, complaining of the same thing. How could I help them on that point, when I did not know how to get right myself? I took them to the seventh chapter of Romans, and there left them, saying, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" I was there myself, and supposed I must live and die there.

In this state I was exposed to severe temptations and attacks of the enemy. I made strong and repeated resolutions that I would be faithful, but could not keep them. Then I sought and found

forgiveness again, and was happy, and said, "Oh that I could always enjoy such peace!" But it was soon disturbed by some word, or act, or heart-wandering.

Thus I lived on for many years : now happy in my Christian experience, and now unhappy ; sometimes doubting and fearing, and sometimes resting. God gave me success in winning souls, and granted me many hours of sweet communion with my Saviour, for which I am truly grateful ; still I was unsatisfied, — I wanted an *uninterrupted* rest and peace.

I often read those precious words, uttered by our Saviour, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." I longed and prayed

to be there, but knew not the way. Oh that some one had then taught me the way of rest in Jesus!

I frequently met Christians who claimed sinless perfection: many of them were, indeed, a better type of Christians than ordinary professors; but they did not seem perfect to me. The rest in Jesus, for which I longed, was still unfound.

At last I felt that the question for me to settle was this,—Can an imperfect Christian sweetly and constantly rest in a perfect Saviour, without condemnation?

This I revolved in my mind for a long time. I read, as far as I could, the experiences of those who seemed to live nearest to Christ. I searched the Scrip-

tures for light, and asked such as I believed had power with God to pray with and for me, that I might be led aright on this great question. At length I became satisfied that Christ had made provision for me and all his children to abide in the fulness of his love without one moment's interruption.

Having settled this, I said: I need this; I long for it; I cannot truly represent religion without it, and Christ is dishonored by me every day I live without it.

I therefore deliberately resolved, by the help of my Redeemer, to obtain it at any sacrifice; little realizing how unlike Christ I then was, or how much would be needed to bring me there.

I first procured a blank book, which I

called my "Consecration Book," and slowly and solemnly, on my knees, wrote in it the following *dedication* : —

ANDOVER, February 10, 1859.

"This day I make a new consecration of my all to Christ.

"Jesus, I now and for ever give myself to thee ; my soul to be washed in thy blood and saved in heaven at last ; my whole body to be used for thy glory ; my mouth to speak for thee at all times ; my eyes to weep over lost sinners, or to be used for any purpose for thy glory ; my feet to carry me where thou shalt wish me to go ; my heart to be burdened for souls, or used for thee anywhere ; my intellect to be employed at all times for thy cause and glory. I

give to thee my wife, my children, my property, all I have, and all that ever shall be mine. I will obey thee in every known duty.

“A. B. E.”

I then asked for grace to enable me to carry out that vow, and that I might take nothing from the altar. I supposed, with this consecration, entire as far as knowledge went, I should soon receive all that my longing heart could contain; but in this I was sadly mistaken.

I think I then came nearer to Christ. But as clearer light began to shine into my heart, I saw more of its vileness.

I find in my journal the following : —

BOSTON, December 22, 1859.

“The last three weeks have been weeks of great searching of heart. I never had my heart so searched before. I detect pride, envy, self-will, a great deal of unbelief, my love to the Saviour to be very weak. Yet I have consecrated all to Christ, and cannot withdraw it from the altar. Oh, can a worm so vile be like Christ? I know it is possible; and if I am ever to be like him, why not now, while I am where I can do good in leading others to him?”

I felt like a patient who, though in the hands of a skilful physician, groans and writhes under the severe treatment which has been found necessary in order to save his life. But my constant

prayer was, "Be thorough with me, Jesus,—be thorough." Many a discouraging day followed this consecration and these heart-searchings. I grew weak and small and unworthy in my own estimation.

At times my joy and peace were almost unbounded. Sometimes I felt that I grasped the prize so earnestly sought, but was shown some hidden sin in my heart which greatly humbled and distressed me. How fully I realized the words of J. B. Taylor, who said, while seeking this blessing, "Notwithstanding my profession that I had crucified the world, the flesh, and the devil, I have had keener sorrows for indwelling sin than I ever experienced before conversion.

“ Oh, the distress which I have felt on account of pride, envy, love of the world, and other evil passions which have risen up and disturbed my peace, and separated between God and my soul ! ” How many have realized all this, and even more, in their struggles after abiding rest in Jesus !

One sin that troubled me most, and was the hardest to overcome, was a strong will,—a desire, and almost a determination, to have my own way ;—and thus—even in regard to little things, or any little injury or supposed wrong—to speak without reflection, and sometimes severely, even to those I knew were my friends ; to say, “ I will do this,” and “ I will not do that.”

This I clearly saw must be overcome,

if I would become a consistent and useful Christian. As I could not do it myself, I gave it over to Jesus: he could give me grace to overcome even this. But I found I gave nothing into the hands of Jesus, except by a simple faith. My faith was very deficient and weak: to believe the promises fully was not easy. I believed the theory of religion; but to have my heart grasp the reality, without wavering, was more difficult. Yet I found my faith growing stronger, until at last I came to believe just what God has said in his word. I found first the blade of faith, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear. No rest could be obtained until I could believe just what God had said, and trust him fully.

I felt that I must have in my heart something I did not then possess. Before I could be filled with the fulness of Christ's love I must be emptied of self. Oh, the longing of my heart for what I then believed, and now believe, to be sweet and constant rest in Jesus! I believed I should receive it, and thought it was near.

I soon found it easier to resist temptation. I began to trust Christ and his promises more fully.

With this mingling of faith, desire, and expectation, I commenced a meeting on Cape Cod. After re-dedicating myself, in company with others, anew to God, I was in my room alone, pleading for the fulness of Christ's love, when all at once a sweet, heavenly peace filled

all the vacuum in my soul, leaving no longing, no unrest, no dissatisfied feeling in my bosom. I felt, I knew, that I was accepted fully of Jesus. A calm, simple, childlike trust took possession of my whole being. I felt that if I had a thousand hearts and lives, I would give them all to the Saviour: my grateful love to him found expression in these glowing lines:—

“ Oh for a thousand tongues to sing
My dear Redeemer’s praise ;
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of his grace ! ”

Then, for the first time in my life, I had that rest which is more than peace. I had felt peace before, but feared I should not retain it; now I had peace without fear, which really became rest.

That night I retired to sleep without one fear, — much like a tired babe resting in its mother's arms. I believed Jesus had received me, and would keep me. I had no fear of losing that happy state : the fear which had so disturbed my rest was taken away. I seemed in a new world : my burden was gone, my cup was full, and Jesus was present with me. I felt not only that I was forgiven and cleansed, but that Jesus would hereafter keep me ; that I should not have to help him keep me, as I had been vainly trying to do, but could trust it all to him ; that now I had two hands instead of one to work with.

I was a Christian before. I loved Christ, and his people, and his cause ;

yet did not, could not, trust myself without fear in his hands. But now I seemed all at once to lose a great burden of care and anxiety.

I found that much of my care had been not only useless, but a hinderance to my success, rendering my work in Christ's cause much harder and less pleasant to myself. I had been like the traveller with a heavy burden on his back, who, when invited by a friend to ride in his carriage and rest himself, took his seat with his burden still weighing him down. When asked to lay his burden off while riding, and rest, he replied, "Oh, sir, you have been so kind to let me ride, I will carry my burden myself." I had not learned to lay my burden on Jesus while toiling in his

vineyard, which would have rendered my work comparatively light and easy.

The Bible seemed like a new book. I had, as it were, read with a veil before my eyes. All through the week I labored on without fear of losing the long-sought, and now so highly-prized blessing. I believed, in the hour of temptation, Christ would keep me, and I should not lose that happy state.

This change occurred about five o'clock on the evening of the second day of November, 1863; and although I never felt so weak and small, yet Jesus has been my all since then. There has not been one hour of conscious doubt or darkness since that time. A heaven of peace and rest fills my soul. Day and night the Saviour

seems by me. Preaching is a luxury, — it is a glorious work. In prayer Christ does not seem far away, but near and with me. The Bible still appears like a new book. All Christians are dearer to me than ever before. All earthly ties are more precious to me; home, friends, all blessings, temporal or spiritual, are dearer and brighter than ever before. That terrible fear and torment about death is in a great measure gone. Thought is quickened. My views of truth are much clearer than before. I have come to believe just what God says. I can trust him, and go forward, even “with sealed orders.”

My success in leading souls to Jesus has been much greater than before. My joy in telling the world of Christ

and his goodness constantly increases. And as I realize more and more the greatness of his love, and the perfection of his character, my swelling heart often cries out, —

“ Oh, could I speak the matchless worth,
Oh, could I sound the glories forth,
Which in my Saviour shine ! ”

Oh that I had an angel's tongue, or could in some way express to others the love I bear to Jesus !

“ I'd sing the characters he bears,
And all the forms of love he wears,
Exalted on his throne. ”

If any one should ask if this is “ sinless perfection,” I would answer, No, by no means. I feel very imperfect and weak, yet I am enabled to believe and

trust Jesus; and he is so near that I have realized, in several instances of little inconsistencies, that before the dark wave reached my soul to produce condemnation, Jesus said, "Peace, be still."

Temptation is presented, but the power of it is broken. I seem to have a present Saviour in every time of need; so that for several years I have done the trusting and Jesus the keeping; it is much easier now to resist temptation than it was before.

I feared the crosses would be much heavier if I was nearer Jesus; but they are much lighter now; so that I can sum it all up in a few words, and call it, not perfection, not a sinless state, but *rest* — the rest of faith, — a calm, sweet resting all with Christ. This state of

heart is reached only by faith, and retained only by faith; not by helping Christ take care of us, but by trusting him to do it all.





CHAPTER VII.

IMPERFECT, YET SWEETLY RESTING.

DOES any one ask how an imperfect Christian can rest in a perfect Saviour, and feel no condemnation?

For many years I stumbled at this point. I could not then find, and cannot now, the doctrine of sinless perfection, in this life, in the word of God. And yet I find imperfect and erring Christians sweetly abiding in Christ's love, walking with him, without condemnation. "Enoch walked with God," in the higher sense, "and he was not, for

God took him." For three hundred years his peace and rest in God seem to have been undisturbed.

Paul says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." He realized this in his own experience, and yet confesses his imperfections as a Christian. Many others have experienced and confessed the same.

After a long search and much prayer, I found that the secret of rest in Christ was not in our perfect soundness, nor in our entire obedience; but in our entire surrender of all to Christ, with an unwavering, unquestioning trust; and his meeting all the demands of the law in such a way that the soul realizes no con-

demnation. He "is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth;" that is, meets all the demands of the law, fulfils all its requirements for us, on the simple condition that we fully believe in him, and confide all to him; no merit in us, no righteousness, no equivalent rendered by us; Jesus does it all, redeems, keeps, and sanctifies.

Perhaps a figure will relieve the mind of the reader: —

Suppose you had a great many debts coming due every day, and these debts were a constant source of grief and pain because you were unable to meet the demands, though they were just.

After a long season of distress and worrying, a kind rich friend says to you, "I know all about your indebtedness,

and your inability to meet it; but if you will come to my house, and trust all to me, I promise you undisturbed rest as long as you choose to remain with me: no one shall disturb you." You fully believe and trust him, and go to his house. A short time after reaching his home, you hear his bell ring. He goes to the door. Some one inquires if you are in the house; your friend replies that you are, and asks what is wanted. The creditor at the door says, "I have a bill of fifty dollars I would like to have him settle." The bill is promptly paid by your friend without disturbing you. Thus your rich friend continues to meet all just demands brought against you during your stay with him.

He knew before he made the offer just what he was undertaking to do, and that he had all needed means to do with.

Do you not see how you could be at rest, knowing that your rich friend was daily meeting demands that you were entirely unable to pay, while his means were unbounded?

This rich, precious friend is Jesus, who said to me long ago, when I was worrying over my inability to keep myself or atone for one sin, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." "I came into this world to help just such sinners as you are." But I did not, and seemingly

could not, believe it, and continued to worry. But at last I was enabled to believe just what Jesus said, and trust him entirely; and at once he gave me rest,—not fear, not torment, but sweet, constant, abiding rest.

Thus while I believe and trust Christ entirely, nothing wavering, he gives me rest; not Jesus and my faithfulness, but Jesus alone, gives me rest. So that Christ is made at this very point, to those who fully believe, “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.” Christ meets at first, and all along the way, the demands of the law for us, on the simple condition that we fully believe, and trust all to him.

In this way an imperfect Christian

can, by an unshaken faith, rest in a perfect Saviour without condemnation. His faith is counted (as it was to Abraham) for perfect satisfaction for every claim the perfect law of God brings against the soul.





CHAPTER VIII.

THE VALUE OF FAITH.

“Faith is the rainbow’s form
Hung on the brow of heaven;
The glory of the passing storm,
The pledge of mercy given.
It is the bright triumphal arch,
Through which the saints to glory march.”

FAITH is so important that the soul cannot be saved without it. When Christ finds a lost, condemned sinner asking what he must do to be saved, he does not send him to the law for help, nor require of him an equivalent for salvation; but takes from him all reli-

ance on every thing but himself, and says, "Only believe." If this is done, there is at once a transfer of Christ's perfect righteousness to him, and his pollution and guilt to Christ. In this way every demand of the law is met as perfectly as it would be if the sinner had never fallen.

No wonder that when this stupendous plan of redemption was first rumored in heaven, the angels wanted to look into it. Every attribute of the Godhead here seems united to save a lost soul. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." What a meeting and blending of divine perfection. "O, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God."

“ Here the whole Deity is seen ;
Nor can a creature trace
Which of the glories brighter shine,
The justice or the grace.”

The same truth is seen in the experience of all who abide in Christ's love. They do not continue there simply because they are faithful and watchful, but because they rely — not partly, but wholly — on Christ to keep them. Faith sprinkles the blood on the door-posts, and retires within the house and is calm. God sees the blood, and passes by. So that our peace and rest are undisturbed, while our faith in Christ remains unshaken.

There need not necessarily be a change in the opinions or doctrines of one abiding in Christ's love : his senti-

ments never may have been dearer to him. The difference is in his faith. He has let go of all but Jesus, and relies on him for peace and rest, and is not disappointed.

Formerly, if he had a season of great religious enjoyment, he was almost sure that it would be followed by depression and darkness. Now it is not so: he can trust Christ without this fear, and may go forward trusting and resting through life. "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever."

Reader, before I close let me ask you, Are you enjoying the fulness of Christ's love? are you sweetly resting in Christ by faith now? If so, will you, with a

grateful, humble heart, make known (if you are not now doing it) in every suitable way and place this rich experience? Say to all around you, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he has done for my soul." Christ says, "Ye are my witnesses." The Spirit will use your testimony in assisting others to "obtain like precious faith."

Christians all around you are groaning and suffering for the want of the very light you can give them. Not only let your light shine on this subject, but let it, like the light along our coasts, be a "revolving light," throwing off its bright and happy rays all around you.

But if you are yet saying, "O wretched man that I am! who shall de-

liver me from the body of this death?" if you realize in your heart an unrest, a hungering and thirsting after the fulness of Christ's love, let me urge you at once, without dismissing the subject from your thoughts, to give yourself anew to the Saviour, never to be taken back. Press your importunity for light and help at this point. Begin to trust Christ as never before, without questioning. Trust him all you can just to-day. Pray for faith: it is the gift of God in answer to prayer. Ask, seek, knock, until the door is opened to you, until you can believe just what God has said, and trust him without wavering. The time is short; what you do must be done soon. Christ paid a great price for you, and needs you with

your full armor on. Souls on every hand are pressing their way to death, and must be saved soon, or not at all. "Awake! awake! put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city." Thus arrayed "one can chase a thousand." And Christ will then lay out plenty of work for you, knowing that you are not only willing, but prepared by the fulness of his love, to do it.

When you can trust Christ without wavering, and a calm, sweet, abiding peace and rest fill your whole heart, then you are just prepared to grow in divine things. The roots of your faith can strike deep into the soil of truth and love, and need not be disturbed again until transplanted into heavenly

soil, there to continue to grow and flourish for ever in the garden of the Lord. "And so shall we ever be with the Lord."

"Then shall I see and hear and know
All I desired or wished below ;
And every power find sweet employ
In that eternal world of joy."





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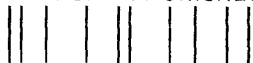
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